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## **Northeast Regional Ocean Council Applauds Launch of Ocean Data Portal**

Developed to enhance regional ocean planning efforts, the new Northeast Ocean Data Portal ([www.northeastoceandata.org](http://www.northeastoceandata.org)) contains regional spatial data on human activities, natural resources, and jurisdictional information for New England's coasts and ocean waters. These data are available to the public and can be viewed online and downloaded for use in GIS platforms.

Specifically, the portal includes interactive and static maps, atlases, and models for coastal and marine spatial planning. It features the Northeast Ocean Data Viewer, a user-friendly interactive map that can be used to visualize data on human uses, environmental features, and political and administrative boundaries. It also includes a data catalog with downloadable data files, a directory of web mapping services, and a guide to other data resources, along with a select listing of coastal and marine spatial planning authorities in the northeast region.

The data, map viewer, and other tools included with the Northeast Ocean Data Portal are the result of over a year's worth of extensive effort. A collaboration of organizations with data development experience worked closely with the Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC) and other regional ocean management partners to develop the portal. "As we struggle with how to site complex projects such as wind farms and other regional energy facilities in ocean waters, we see a real need for robust and accessible information," said Daniel Martin of NOAA's Coastal Services Center.

"Recognizing the need to provide managers with access to spatial data within an overall ocean planning context, we decided to work together to develop these management tools," said Betsy Nicholson, NROC's Federal Co-chair. "This collaboration—led by the Massachusetts Ocean Partnership, Northeast Regional Association of Coastal and Ocean Observing Systems, The Nature Conservancy, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Coastal Services Center, Gulf of Maine Research Institute, and Applied Science Associates—has also been coordinating closely with others at the state and national levels to build on and maximize existing efforts."

“The new Northeast Ocean Data Portal is a great tool that puts needed information into the hands of managers to help support ocean planning and other decisions within a regional context,” said Bruce Carlisle, NROC member and Acting Director for Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management. “On behalf of NROC, we thank everyone involved for their hard work to make the portal a reality.”

In the coming months, additional spatial data will be added in response to identified priority regional data needs. Additionally, NROC and regional partners will be discussing additional functions and decision-support tool development to further assist regional ocean planning needs. In the coming months, check the site often to see these upgrades.

The Northeast Regional Ocean Council (<http://collaborate.csc.noaa.gov/nroc>) is a state and federal partnership with the goal of engaging in regional protection and balanced use of ocean and coastal resources. NROC's coordinated approach reaches from Maine to Connecticut to find and implement solutions to the region's most pressing ocean and coastal issues.